(a) whether it is a fact that, due to shortage of bogies, new trains are not being operated;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is considering to establish new factories in view of the shortage of bogies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Introduction of new trains is affected on account of shortage of coaches. However, to meet the additional demand, new manufacturing factories for coaches are being set up.

(c) and (d) A new coach factory has been sanctioned with the capacity to produce 800 coaches per year at Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh. Proposal for setting up of manufacturing unit at Palakkad in Kerala has been announced in the Railway Budget 2008-09. Besides, proposal for manufacturing of coaches under joint venture/public private partnership mode has been announced in the Railway Budget 2009-10 to set up a rail coach factory at Kanchrapara in West Bengal.

Rail links with Nepal and Bhutan

263. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Railways has come up with a plan to build links with Nepal and Bhutan to counter China's great push to build railway links in South Asia;

(b) if so, whether RITES has been asked to conduct feasibility studies in this regard and submit its report;

(c) if so, the details of the reports submitted by RITES;

(d) whether the cost of these projects has been estimated; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (e) Preliminary Engineering cum Traffic surveys have been conducted by M/s RITES for new rail connectivity proposals in Nepal and feasibility-studies in Bhutan. Details of the surveys completed alongwith estimated cost of the projects is as follows:-

Nepal

Sl. No.	Proposed rail links		Distance	Estimated cost
	From	To	(in Km)	(in Rs. cr.)
1	Jogbani	Biratnagar (Nepal)	19	243
2	Jayanagar	Bijalpura (Nepal) & extn. to Bardidas	70	447
3	Nepalganj Road	Nepalganj (Nepal)	12	149
4	Nautanwa	Bhairahawa (Nepal)	15	176
5	New Jalpaiguri	Kakarbhita *via* Panittanki (Nepal)	46	358

Bhutan-

Sl. No.	Proposed rail links From	Distance To	Estimated cost (in Km)	(in Rs. cr.)
1	Hasimara (West Bengal)	Phuentsholing	18	271
2	Rangia (Assam)	Samdrupjongkhar *Via* Darranga	48	583
3	Kokrajhar (Assam)	Gelephu	58	304
4	Banarhat (West Bengal)	Samtse	23	206
5	Pathshala (Assam)	Nanglam	51	751

Further, Detailed Engineering Survey has been undertaken by M/s RITES for Jogbani-Biratnagat and Jayanagar-Bardib as new railway lines in Nepal & for Hasimara-Phuentsholing new railway line in Bhutan.

Bridge over river Chenab

264. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the proposal of construction of a bridge over river Chenab for linking the Kashmir Valley with the rest of India, has been cleared and the abandoned project, the old alignment involving a cost of 1000 crores for the mega-arch bridge, and girder bridge estimated to cost one-tenth *i.e.* Rs. 100 crores has not been accepted; and

(b) if so, whether the apprehended safety reservations expressed by a foreign expert Member of the Committee has been glossed over?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) An Expert Committee was appointed to deliberate on the issue of the stability of the slopes of Chenab bridge. In view of the importance of the structure the said Committee recommended certain field investigations and studies before recommencement of work on the bridge. The required tests have been carried out and the reports are under consideration. There has been no proposal for constructing a girder bridge costing Rs. 100 crore in lieu of mega arch bridge.

(b) Two foreign experts had given their opinion, one of them considered the existing site acceptable while the other suggested further studies for remedial measures to reduce any risk. Accordingly, studies have been conducted.

Proposal for Joginder Nagar - Pathankot - Leh rail line

†265. SHRI SHANTA KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi